

**CALFED Bay-Delta Program Fish Assessment Process  
Working Meeting Summary  
August 22 and 27, 1996**

**Meeting Purpose and Goals**

The purpose of the August 22 and August 27 working meetings was to respond to agency interest in being involved in the development of the fisheries assessment process for the CALFED Bay-Delta Program (CALFED) Programmatic EIR/EIS. These meetings were a follow-up to the initial meetings held on June 21, 1996. The goals of the August 22 and 27 meetings were to reach general agreement on a preliminary list of proposed species and assessment variables, and to develop a step-by-step approach for developing and implementing the fish assessment process for CALFED. CALFED distributed its draft Fish Assessment Process Working Document (dated August 22, 1996) to facilitate discussion.

**Specific Comments on the Proposed Species List**

Input was received on the proposed species list. Agreement was reached to expand the species list to include additional anadromous species, invertebrates, resident fish species, upper riverine resident species, and marine/estuarine-dependent species. It was recommended that a screening process with specific criteria also be developed to refine the species list and provide a defensible process and rationale for finalizing the species list. It was also noted that the CALFED schedule was very tight and CALFED staff should attempt to identify where one species could serve as an indicator species for other similar species, species guilds, communities, and/or specific habitats.

**Specific Comments on the Proposed Assessment Variables**

CALFED explained that assessment variables and methods in its "working document" are not all-inclusive, but represent numerous types of available methods and provide a starting point and format for future discussions. Participants thought that the list of impact assessment variables and corresponding life stages could be reduced. It was recommended that the assessment process focus on the key assessment variables directly affecting fish. Most agreed that the available information is sufficient to develop a list of the most important limiting factors for each species. It was suggested that an emphasis be placed on key water management operations in the Delta and direct effects on fish. Indirect effects and qualitative factors could be evaluated in a more general manner. It was noted that considerable work and research has been done in this area and that Interagency Ecological Program (IEP) work teams could be useful in providing information to determine the important assessment variables for use in the fish assessment process.

## **General Comments From CALFED**

CALFED provided several general comments with broad application to the fish assessment process as follows:

- impacts need to be measured on a general (programmatic) scale,
- the time frame for impact analysis is short (October 1996-March 1997),
- the draft preferred program alternative will be selected in April 1997,
- the process needs to measure relative benefits and impacts of the three preliminary program alternatives, and
- the process will characterize benefits of the four common programs for all of the alternatives.

## **General Comments From Workshop Participants**

CALFED received numerous recommendations regarding the fish assessment process. Comments with widespread support in both the August 22 and 27 meetings were as follows:

The CALFED fisheries assessment process should:

- include a comprehensive species list which includes sport, commercial, and special-status species;
- use the best available information sources, including IEP data;
- use IEP's established work teams to assist in the development of the assessment process;
- organize work efforts around groups of species;
- encourage all interested agencies and stakeholders to participate;
- to the extent possible, establish work priorities with agency supervisors;
- identify the benefits of the ecosystem restoration components;
- discuss the value of native and historically present species; and
- utilize information in the EET report as a reference document.

## **Action Items**

Preliminary agency work teams were identified for each group of species. Meeting participants and invited stakeholders were asked to rank the importance of assessment variables into one of three categories: definitely important, may be important, or not important. CALFED contacted and requested formal participation from IEP. CALFED agreed to prepare a revised species list, rationale for including each fish species in the revised list, and summarized meeting notes. CALFED would also review and incorporate comments received regarding assessment variables.

This information would be provided to all participating agency and stakeholder representatives by September 9, 1996 for review prior to the next work session on September 13, 1996, 9:00 to 12:00 a.m., 1325 J Street, Room 1946, Sacramento, California.

# **Attendees at August 22 or 27, 1996 Working Meeting**

Jim White - DFG  
Dale Sweetnam - DFG  
Randall Baxter - DFG  
Pete Chadwick - DFG  
David Kohlhorst - DFG  
Bill Snider - DFG  
Jim Starr - DFG  
Heather McIntire - DFG  
Terry Mills - DFG  
Jim Arthur - USBR  
Bob Pine - USFWS  
Andrew Hamilton - USFWS  
Marty Kjelson - USFWS  
Bruce Herbold - EPA

Chris Mobley - NMFS  
Jim Martin - DWR  
Katie Wadsworth - DWR  
Alice Low - CH2M Hill  
Dick Daniel - CALFED  
Sharon Gross - CALFED  
Ray McDowell - CALFED  
Phil Dunn - CALFED consultant  
Tom Cannon - CALFED consultant  
Aimee Dour - CALFED consultant  
Warren Shaul - CALFED consultant  
Dale Flowers - CALFED consultant  
Marco Bell - CALFED consultant